

3.0 Project Description

Project Setting and Planning Area

The City of Riverside is located in western Riverside County and is bounded on the north by the unincorporated Riverside County communities of Rubidoux and Jurupa and the City of Colton (San Bernardino County), on the east by the Riverside County City of Moreno Valley, to the south by unincorporated communities of Riverside County, and to the west by the Riverside County cities of Norco and Corona. **Figure 3-1** shows the regional location.

The Project Planning Area consists of the corporate boundaries of the City of Riverside, the City's Northern Sphere of Influence and the near Southern Sphere of Influence (**Figure 3-2**). The near Southern Sphere of Influence encompasses lands from the City's southern border to the crest of the Cajalco Ridge, just south of Cajalco Road. The Planning Area does not include the far Southern Sphere, which extends south from the crest of Cajalco Ridge to the Sphere boundary, as defined by the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). This Planning Area consists of approximately 93,000 acres, of which about 52,000 acres lie within Riverside City limits as of 2004.

The Project

The Project is the adoption and implementation of the following programmatic land use planning documents:

1. Comprehensive update of the City of Riverside General Plan
2. Comprehensive update of the City of Riverside Zoning Code (Title 19 of the Municipal Code of the City of Riverside) and the rezoning of properties to reflect new zoning district names and to respond to General Plan land use designation changes in 28 focus areas City-wide
3. Comprehensive update of the City of Riverside Subdivision Ordinance (Title 18 of the Riverside Municipal Code)
4. Adoption of Citywide Design Guidelines and Sign Guidelines
5. Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

For the purposes of this EIR, the above documents are collectively referred to as "the Project."

General Plan

The City of Riverside General Plan was last updated comprehensively in 1994. Since then, only two major amendments have occurred: (1) in 2001, the City adopted a revised Housing Element, and (2) in 2003, the City adopted a new (optional) Historic Preservation Element.

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Figure 3-1 – Regional Location
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Figure 3-2 - Project Planning Area

The City has undertaken a comprehensive update of the General Plan that involves changes to all required elements, except the Historic Preservation Element, to incorporate the City's vision into an action-oriented document.

The draft General Plan, referred to herein as the draft General Plan or General Plan, includes the following elements. Abbreviations used for numbering objectives and policies within elements are noted in parentheses.

- Land Use and Urban Design (LU) – required element
- Circulation and Community Mobility (CCM) – required element
- Housing (H) – required element
- Arts and Culture (AC) – optional element
- Education (E) – optional element
- Public Safety (PS) – required element
- Noise (N) – required element
- Open Space and Conservation (OSC) – required element
- Public Facilities and Infrastructure (PF) – required issues
- Parks and Recreation (PR) – required issues
- Historic Preservation (HP) – optional element
- Air Quality (AQ) – optional element

The Historic Preservation Element, adopted in 2003 (GP-005-023) has not been revised as part of this current effort. The City adopted a negative declaration for the 2003 Historic Preservation Element.

Key new proposals contained in the draft General Plan include:

1. Introduction of three new mixed-use development land use categories: Mixed Use – Neighborhood, Mixed Use – Village and Mixed Use – Urban. These categories have been established to encourage revitalization of underutilized commercial properties, to enact smart growth policies and to reduce urban sprawl by facilitating infill development.
2. Introduction of the Very High Density Residential (VHDR) land use category to allow for a density of up to 40 dwelling units per acre at strategic locations in the City.
3. Changes to the Master Plan of Circulation to minimize the effects of regional growth on Riverside and to protect neighborhoods from “cut-through” traffic.
4. Inclusion of an Education Element that emphasizes the importance of partnering with all of Riverside's educational institutions toward achieving community life-long learning goals.
5. Inclusion of an Arts and Culture Element that recognizes the many benefits arts can bring to the City, with a focus on promoting Riverside as the arts and cultural center of the Inland Empire.
6. Inclusion of a Parks and Recreation Element that reflects policies and programs contained in the recently adopted (2004) Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

7. Inclusion of an Air Quality Element that emphasizes the City's resolve to be a leader in improving local and regional air quality.
8. Rescission of the Victoria Avenue Specific Plan and Hawarden Hills Specific Plan.

As a result of full implementation of General Plan land use policy, the City's population has the potential to grow from approximately 274,000 persons in 2003 to approximately 353,397 in 2025. For the Planning Area, the build-out population is estimated at 376,000. The City's previous General Plan (from 1992) anticipated a population for the year 2010 of 310,000 for a Planning Area whose southern boundary stopped just north of Lake Mathews. The anticipated buildout population of this General Plan is more consistent with the population projections set forth by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). SCAG's projections reflect regional and statewide anticipated growth trends.

The General Plan update will enable the development of approximately 38,100 new dwelling units and 39.6 million square feet of new non-residential development throughout the Planning Area. **Figure 3-3** (Land Use Policy Map) shows the land use designations proposed by the General Plan update.

Zoning Code

The City of Riverside Zoning Code (Title 19, Riverside Municipal Code) has not been comprehensively revised since 1956, although it has been amended numerous times over the years to remain consistent with changes in State laws and to respond to changing City needs and objectives. The Zoning Code revision involves, but is not limited to:

1. Changes to reflect new land use policies contained in the updated General Plan, including addition of three mixed-use zones to implement the updated General Plan land use classifications. **Table 3-1** shows the correlation between zoning districts and General Plan land use categories. **Table 3-2** shows how old and new zoning districts have been reconciled.
2. Reorganization/reformatting to create a logical, intuitive organization to facilitate its use by citizens, interested parties and City staff responsible for its administration.
3. Updates to provide consistency with the most recent changes in State and Federal laws and regulations.
4. Reworking of administrative procedures and processes to simplify and streamline the development review process.

As part of this Project, zoning designations will be updated on the Official Zoning Map to reflect the new zoning district names. Portions of the Zoning Map will be updated following adoption of the Project. However, as a charter City under California Government Code Section 34400 et seq, Riverside is not required to maintain consistency between its General Plan and Zoning classifications.

Appendix B shows maps identifying parcels whose zone will change with Project adoption.

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Figure 3-3 – Land Use Policy Map
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**Table 3-1
Zoning District – General Plan Land Use Correlation**

Zoning District (Zone)	Zone Symbol	Corresponding General Plan Land Use Designation
Residential Agricultural	RA-5	Agriculture, Agricultural/Rural Residential
Residential Conservation	RC	Hillside Residential
Rural Residential	RR	Semi-Rural Residential
Residential Estate	RE, R-1-1/2 acre	Very Low Density Residential
Single-family Residential	R-1-13000 R-1-10500	Low Density Residential
Single-family Residential	R-1-8000 R-1-7000	Medium Density Residential
Medium High Density Residential	R-3-4000 R-3-3000	Medium High Density Residential
High Density Residential	R-3-2000 R-3-1500	High Density Residential
Very High Density Residential	R-4	Very High Density Residential
Office - Restricted	O	Office
Commercial Retail	CR	Commercial
Commercial General	CG	Commercial
Commercial Regional Center	CRC	Commercial Regional Center
Mixed Use – Neighborhood	MU-N	Mixed Use – Neighborhood
Mixed Use – Village	MU-V	Mixed Use – Village
Mixed Use – Urban	MU-U	Mixed Use – Urban
Business and Manufacturing Park	BMP	Business/Office Park
General Industrial	I	Industrial
Air Industrial	AI	Business/Office Park
Airport	AIR	Industrial
Public Facilities	PF	Public Facilities
Railway	RWY	All
Downtown Specific Plan	DSP	Downtown Specific Plan
Airport Protection Overlay	(AP)	All
Building Setback Overlay	(S)	All
Commercial Storage Overlay	(CS)	LDR, MDR, MHDR, HDR, O, CR, CG, BMP, I, AI, AIR
Height Overlay	(H)	All
Mobile Home Park Overlay	(MH)	MDR
Neighborhood Commercial Overlay	(NC)	Commercial
Specific Plan Overlay	(SP)	All
Watercourse Overlay	(WC)	All

**Table 3-2
Zone Changes**

Old Zone	New Zone	Comment
Residential Zones		
HR (Horse Ranch)	Deleted	The HR Zone has been deleted and the properties will be rezoned to the new RE Zone. A new section on animal keeping has been added to the Code.
RA (Agriculture)	RE (Estate)	Emphasis on agriculture deleted. There are currently only 36 areas with this zoning in the City.
RA-2	Deleted	The RA-2 Zone will be deleted. There are no properties with this zoning at this time.
RA-5	RA-5	Retains minimum 5 acre lot size.
RR (Rural)	RR (Rural)	
RC (Conservation)	RC (Conservation)	
R-1-130	R-1-½ acre	
R-1-125	R-1-13000	
R-1-100	R-1-10500	
R-1-80	R-1-8500	
R-1-65	R-1-7000	
R-2 (Two-family)	Deleted	Deleted per direction of the City Council; properties will be rezoned appropriately.
R-3-R	R-3-2500	
R-3-40	R-3-4000	
R-3-30	R-3-3000	
R-3-20	R-3-2000	
R-3	R-3-1500	
R-3-H	R-4	Density lowered from 54 du/ac to 40 du/ac.
Commercial Zones		
RO (Restricted Office)	O (Office)	
P (Parking)	Deleted	The P Zone has been deleted; properties will be rezoned to appropriate commercial designation. Parking structures and off-site parking lots will be permitted by CUP.
CO (Commercial Office)	Deleted	Zone deleted and combined with O zone. There are only 5 areas in the City with this zoning.
C-1 (Neighborhood Shopping Center)	CR (Commercial Retail)	N overlay zone can be applied
C-1-A (Community Shopping Center)	CRC (Commercial Regional Center)	Regional shopping serving an area beyond Riverside
CL (Commercial Limited)	Deleted	Zone deleted, replaced by either CR or CG depending on location
C-2 (Restricted Commercial)	CR (Commercial Retail)	
Industrial Zones		
MP (Manufacturing Park)	BMP (Business and Manufacturing Park)	Combined with the BP overlay zone to make BMP
M-1 (Light Industrial)	I (General Industrial)	M-1 and M-2 combined to create a new general manufacturing zone
M-2 (General Industrial)	Deleted	

**Table 3-2
Zone Changes**

Old Zone	New Zone	Comment
Other Zones		
WC (Water Course)	WC (Water Course)	Converted to an Overlay Zone
FP (Floodplain)	Deleted	Properties in the FP Zone will be rezoned appropriately and most likely will include WC overlay zone.
RWY (Railway)	RWY (Railway)	Retained and revised slightly
AIR (Airport)	AIR (Airport)	
AI (Air Industrial)	AI (Air Industrial)	
DSP (Downtown Specific Plan)	DSP (Downtown Specific Plan)	
O (Official)	Deleted	Properties in the current O zone will be rezoned with appropriate zoning per adjacent land uses and public uses/use of public property permitted by CUP
Overlay Zones		
BP (Business Park Overlay)	Deleted	The BP Overlay Zone is deleted and has been combined with the old MP Zone to make BMP
D (Design Review)	Deleted	Redundant Overlay Zone
RL (Residential Livestock)	Deleted	The properties with the RL Overlay Zone will be rezoned appropriately and new section on animal keeping
S (Height of Building)	S (Building Height)	Change height to feet instead of stories to accomplish stated purpose
X (Building Setback)	X (Setback)	Changed zoning symbol
SP (Specific Plan)	SP (Specific Plan)	
New Zones		
	MU-N	Mixed-use (Neighborhood)
	MU-V	Mixed-use (Village)
	MU-U	Mixed-use (Urban)
New Overlay Zones		
	AP	Airport Protection Overlay
	CS	Commercial Storage (Mini-storage)
	MH	Mobile Home Park Overlay
	NC	Neighborhood Commercial Overlay, provides additional neighborhood protections when commercial zones are adjacent to residential
C-3 (General Commercial)	CG (General Commercial)	Serving several neighborhoods and the community in general

Subdivision Code

The City of Riverside Subdivision Code (Title 18, Riverside Municipal Code) was last updated comprehensively in 1978. Since then, several changes to the State Subdivision Map Act have occurred. This revision of the City's Subdivision Code has been accomplished to bring the Subdivision Code up to date with current law, to simplify review processes (for example, allowing administrative approval of parcel maps) and to create a more logical organization of the code.

Citywide Design Guidelines and Sign Guidelines

The Citywide Design Guidelines set forth design parameters for development consistent with provisions of the General Plan and Zoning Code. The Guidelines provide text and pictorial representations of desirable and allowable design standards for single and multiple family dwellings, and industrial, commercial, office and public facility buildings. Design areas addressed include site planning, building appearance, landscaping, fences and walls, screening, lighting and open space. The Guidelines also contain a comprehensive chapter on sign guidelines that articulates standards and objectives set forth in the City's Zoning Code.

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

The Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan has been prepared to create a comprehensive and detailed framework of objectives, policies and implementation tools to guide growth and change along one of Riverside's prominent thoroughfares. The Specific Plan builds upon past public visioning programs and associated studies of the corridor. The Specific Plan also builds upon policies and works in tandem with the Zoning Code to regulate land use and development within the Magnolia Avenue corridor. **Figure 3-4** indicates the boundaries of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan is organized around geographic segments of the corridor and includes detailed land use regulations design standards for each of the corridor's several districts. The Specific Plan also identifies streetscape and roadway improvements to be accomplished, including reconfiguration of the Brockton/Magnolia/Central intersection and the potential establishment of a Class I bicycle route along the corridor.

Figure 3-4 – Boundaries of the Magnolia Avenue SP
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Planning Context

The City of Riverside is the largest city within Southern California's "Inland Empire" region. Over the next 20 years, both the City and the region as a whole anticipate substantial population growth. SCAG projects that the population of western Riverside County (stretching from Corona to Banning and including unincorporated areas) will increase from just over 1.4 million people in 2005 to 2.2 million in 2025.¹ During the same period, SCAG projects that the City of Riverside's population will increase from about 280,000 to about 353,397.

Faced with these significant growth projections, in 2001 the City of Riverside began a series of activities to shape a new community vision, in part intended to ensure that future growth could be achieved while maintaining and enhancing the community's major assets and distinctive qualities. Public engagement led to the adoption of a report in 2002 called *Visioning Riverside*. *Visioning Riverside* sets forth a vision of how the City will change over the next two decades. To implement the many facets of this vision, the City initiated a major update to its General Plan. As described above, this program includes comprehensive updates to the General Plan, comprehensive revisions of the Zoning and Subdivision Codes, preparation of a Specific Plan for the Magnolia Avenue Corridor, and preparation of new Citywide Design Guidelines.

A General Plan is a community's planning "constitution" and is the single most important policy document in guiding land use and development decisions within the City. California law requires every general plan to cover, at minimum, seven major land use and development issues typical to most California cities and counties. These seven issues – land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and public safety – are addressed in different chapters of a general plan commonly known as "elements."

Riverside's General Plan distills the City's vision into specific objectives, policies, and implementation actions that will guide the physical development of the City through the year 2025.

Project Objectives

The Project consists of the implementation of the policy documents listed above. Major overall objectives for the entire Project are as follows:

General Plan

- Encourage the revitalization of underutilized commercial properties through redesignation of lands for mixed-use development.
- Enact smart growth principles to improve the quality of life for City residents and to reduce urban sprawl.

¹ Southern California Association of Governments, 2004 Projections.

- Allow for higher density residential uses at underutilized in-town locations where residents will have access to transit and supportive commercial services.
- Establish neighborhoods as the fundamental planning units of the City.
- Preserve and enhance the City's natural and cultural assets.
- Provide circulation facilities adequate to serve proposed land uses and meet community needs.
- Minimize the negative impacts of regional traffic upon the City's local roadways.
- Establish policies to facilitate partnerships among Riverside's cultural and educational institutions to achieve community goals.
- Establish policies and programs to enhance the City's standing as the arts and cultural center of the Inland Empire.
- Establish policies and programs that will contribute to the improvement of local and regional air quality.
- Establish policies to ensure that people are protected from health and safety hazards and unwanted noise intrusion.
- Ensure the provision of adequate public facilities and public services to existing and to-be-developed portions of the Planning Area.

Zoning Code Revision

- Update Zoning Code text and map to reflect new land use policies contained in the updated General Plan.
- Reorganize to create a logical and intuitive format to facilitate use by citizens, interested parties and City staff responsible for zoning administration.
- Make consistent with the most recent changes in State and Federal laws and regulations.
- Reduce and reorganize residential, commercial and industrial zoning districts to simplify the land use classification system.
- Simplify and streamline administrative procedures and processes.

Subdivision Code Revision

- Reorganize to create a logical and intuitive format to facilitate use by citizens, land developers and City staff responsible for subdivision administration.
- Make consistent with the most recent changes in State and Federal laws and regulations.
- Update to reflect new land use and circulation policies contained in the updated General Plan.
- Simplify and streamline administrative procedures and processes.

Citywide Design Guidelines and Sign Guidelines

- Provide visual examples of desirable and allowable design features applicable to all new future development.
- Reduce uncertainty in the discretionary review of new developments.
- Provide for quality building design.
- Provide for signage that complements developments and achieves the City's overall design objectives.
- Improve the visual character of the City's built environment.

Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan

- Provide a detailed framework of growth and change for the City's transportation backbone consistent with land use, urban design and circulation objectives and policies within the General Plan update.
- Develop an improvement plan for the "flytrap" intersection of Magnolia/Brockton Central that improves traffic flow and increases driver and pedestrian safety.
- Enhance the public streetscape of Magnolia Avenue.
- Facilitate transit usage along Riverside's principal arterial roadway.
- Encourage quality design that enhances the overall appearance of Magnolia Avenue.

Relationship to Local and Regional Plans

The Project consists of interrelated and coordinated policy documents. The General Plan sets forth objectives and policies that will be implemented in part by other Project components: the Zoning and Subdivision Codes, the Citywide Design Guidelines and the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan. The inclusion of the latter components within the Project

will ensure consistency with the General Plan. Several other local and regional plans are relevant to the planning process and will also serve to implement the General Plan, and which have a bearing upon Riverside's development decisions.

Redevelopment Plans

The Riverside Redevelopment Agency administers several redevelopment project areas throughout the City. The project areas as of September 2004 encompass the following:

Arlington	Hunter Park/Northside	Riverside Airport
Casa Blanca	La Sierra/Arlanza	Sycamore Canyon
Downtown	Magnolia Center	University Corridor
Highgrove		

Following adoption of the Project, individual redevelopment plans may need to be amended to reflect and be consistent with the General Plan and other project components, such as new zoning districts. Redevelopment plan areas are shown in Figure LU-6 of the Land Use and Urban Design Element.

Specific Plans

A specific plan is a detailed plan for the development of a particular area. California Government Code Section 65451 et seq. sets forth the required content of a specific plan. As implied by the name, specific plans are intended to provide detailed specification of the types of uses to be permitted, development standards (setbacks, heights, landscaping, architecture, etc.) and circulation and infrastructure improvements. Specific plans are often used to ensure that multiple property owners and developers adhere to a common development plan over time. Specific plans can also offer flexibility in development standards from what is prescribed within a zoning ordinance as a means of providing superior design. However, Government Code Section 65454 requires that specific plans be consistent with a community's adopted General Plan.

The Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan is one component of the Project. As a means of ensuring the coordinated development of the City's major local transportation backbone, this plan will provide detailed implementation tools and design standards consistent with but more specific than the General Plan.

The City has adopted several Specific Plans, which are noted in **Table 3-3**.

**Table 3-3
Specific Plans**

Plan Name	Adoption Date	Adoption Resolution Number
Canyon Springs	January 1984	15249
Downtown	December 2002	20323
Hawarden Hills ¹	April 1977	13073
Hunter Business Park	April 1988	16792
La Sierra	July 1991	17797
La Sierra University	March 1997	19057
Mission Grove (Alessandro Heights)	June 1985	15772
Orangecrest	August 1985	15886
Rancho La Sierra	January 1996	18846
Riverside Auto Center	October 1990	17614
Riverside Marketplace	May 1991	17762
Sycamore Canyon	October 1985	15914
Sycamore Canyon Business Park	April 1984	15328
Sycamore Highlands	November 1990	17625
University Avenue	January 1993	18169
Victoria Avenue ²	May 1972	11878

Source: Land Use and Urban Design Element

1 The Hawarden Hills Specific Plan is rescinded as part of the General Plan Update.

2 The Victoria Avenue Specific Plan is rescinded as part of the General Plan Update.

Riverside County General Plan

The Planning Area includes land area outside the Riverside city limits under the jurisdiction of Riverside County. Riverside County adopted a comprehensive General Plan update in 2003, called the Riverside County Integrated Program (RCIP). Land uses in the unincorporated portions of the Planning Area are governed by the RCIP.

The RCIP includes a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for Western Riverside County intended to protect critical habitat areas for 146 covered animal and plant species. The Project, particularly the General Plan update, includes policies supportive of the Western Riverside MSHCP.

In addition to the MSHCP and Countywide General Plan update, the RCIP also includes a Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process, commonly known as CETAP. CETAP is intended to provide regional coordination and cooperation in the siting and selection of major transportation corridors in Riverside County. The Planning Area includes one designated CETAP Corridor: the Cajalco Road corridor in the near southern sphere of influence.

Besides the RCIP, Riverside County and the three major cities of western Riverside County (Riverside, Corona and Moreno Valley) are signatories to a 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (Cities/County MOU) in which the cities and county agreed to participate in the MSCHP and implement a Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF). The County also agreed that development projects within a city's sphere of influence would be reviewed within the context of the city's applicable land use regulations and development standards.